

IN THE WORLD OF BOOKS.

[In this department of THE ARYAN PATH we will review not only the new publications, but also draw attention to old and valued friends on our shelves. There is no dearth of book-making, but we are not among those who sense nothing but danger to the mind because of the over-production of brochures and tomes. If to no one else, to the writers themselves the labour does some good, and incidentally the printing trade—one of the noblest in any community—is benefited. But we do hold most certainly that it is a great mistake, in the zest of keeping abreast with the new, to forget or even to neglect the old, trusted and tried friends. Culture and inspiration come from a few books; ennoblement of character and bestowal of vision is the privilege also of a few. Great books are rare and so THE ARYAN PATH will insert special articles on these from time to time.

Thus to-day one of the brightest gems of Asia, *The Tao Teh King* is considered. There are very few treatises which quiet the tempestuous mind and the troubled heart, and enable the eyes to pierce the veil of appearances as these sayings of Lao Tzu.

Prof. E. E. Speight of the Osmania University of Hyderabad, having lived for long years in Japan and having perceived the effect, direct and indirect, of the philosophy of the Tao on its followers, writes a very interesting paper which we print below. Next month we will publish from his pen an article entitled "Religious Tendency in Japan."—Eds.]

THE TAO TEH KING.

Human thought may be roughly divided by a line determined by conscious practical activity. This side of it we have the experienced and equated; beyond lie the vast and unadventured regions. The advance of knowledge has or seems to have moved this dividing line forward: that is a problem of metaphysics. The philosophies arising from life-experience have everywhere a similarity of conclusion and conviction; like all other fruit of definite knowledge they seem shrunken and aged as soon as a breath of air blows over the barrier from the region of the unknown. Moreover, the mystic utterances from that other side have also their resemblances: Lao Tzu, Gautama Buddha, Jesus of Galilee, as Jalaluddin Rumi, Kabir, Jakob Boehme, all are leading us out from the finite to the limitless, from complacency to a divine dissatisfaction, from knowledge to wisdom, from the realm of the mind to the universe of the soul. Their body of thought is true Theosophy, being their witness to the divine poetry of life.

And the teaching of all these great men has suffered the same distortion through the ages. The meaning and application of their gospel have been constantly rejected by the popular mind.

Tao is not merely a fearless, joyless drifting on the stream of infinite flux. Tao is eternal inaction, and yet it leaves nothing undone. Nirvana only means annihilation in the sense in which the seed is annihilated in the grown plant.